



A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECT UPON ICT LEARNING

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Abstract

With the rapid advancement of information and communication technology, almost all of the higher education institutions have equipped themselves with new technological tools. This study is an attempt to study the socio-economic effect upon learning through BLOGS. For this study, the survey research design method was used and 150 students from four Arts and Science College in Trivandrum district of Kerala were included as participants. A blog upon Indian Economy was created covering common subject matter 'Indian Agriculture'. An achievement test was conducted upon both the groups. The data so obtained is analysed using an independent sample t-test. Later, scores were co-related to various socio-economic dimensions of students. Findings of the study revealed a significant impact of socio-economic background in the perceived learning of students through BLOGS.

Keywords: ICT, BLOGS, Socio-Economic, Indian Agriculture



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1. Introduction:

Blogs provide opportunities for people to publish their thoughts, opinions and feelings in an online environment. There is no need for special technological skills to develop, update and publish entries while using blogs. Blogs generally share the following features: individual ownership, posted updates displayed in reverse chronological order and the archival of old posts. Blogs have some features that distinguish it from a web page. It allows for easy creation of a page, easy filtering of content for presentation by date or category, and it allows the blog and functional features of blogs allow them to be used creator to invite and add other authors to the blogs (Nedeva & Nedev, 2010). The technological for different purposes (reflective thinking, collaboration, interactivity, etc.) as an educational tool. Blogs have been widely used as one of the Web 2.0 tools in both higher education and the K-12 settings and it can be seen as one of the major tools for sharing knowledge (Hsu & Lin, 2008). It should not be considered as a tool that is used just for providing information online, rather, it can be considered as a tool for learning in an educational context (Hall & Davison, 2007). Goktas and Demirel (2012) find that integrating blogs as a tool for learning can positively influence the learners' Information and Communication Technology (ICT) perception as well as the acquisition of ICT competencies. Blogs can be used to enhance

reflective thinking because blog posts are sequenced chronologically and allow users to see how their thinking has changed over time (Ellison & Wu, 2008). Reflection can be defined as an internal change brought on by thinking or writing, and by exchanging ideas and reflecting together with others (Clarke, 2003). It helps students to express themselves and to practice valuable knowledge and skills. There is a need to study and check the effectiveness to use blogs while teaching. There is need to check how it can be used in a pedagogically sound way in the actual classroom.

This study is performed upon undergraduate Economics students in Trivandrum district to know:

2. Research Questions:

- (i) How do students perceive learning with blogs in Economics learning?
- (ii) What are the factors with emphasis upon Socio-Economic factors affecting student's learning with blogs?

Hypothesis1: There is no difference in the achievement level of boys and girls in learning through 'BLOGS'.

Hypothesis2: There is no difference in the achievement level of students from urban and rural areas in learning through 'BLOGS'.

Hypothesis3: There is no difference in the achievement level of students from state board schooling and central board schooling in learning through 'BLOGS'.

Hypothesis4: There is no difference in the achievement level of students with reference to different income levels of their parents in learning through 'BLOGS'.

Hypothesis5: There is no difference in the achievement level of students with reference to different educational levels of their parents in learning through 'BLOGS'.

3. Sample:

150 students (85 female and 65male) were selected randomly from four Arts and Science College in Trivandrum district of Kerala. All students were from first year of graduation in Economics. Out of these, two were government colleges and the other two were private colleges.

4. Tools:

Tools used in the research to collect information about the sample were mostly based upon the survey method like interview schedule, questionnaire, group discussion, achievement test on blog and Likert Scale.

5. Methodology:

Initially a Likert test was administered upon the sample to know their inclination towards use of ‘BLOGS’ to study Economics. Afterwards a common topic is chosen from the subject Indian Economy. During interaction with students it is found that college students are mostly inclined in studying ‘Indian Agriculture’- a topic in Indian Economy. Students are divided into the control and experimental group. Out of the sample one government and a private college students were taught by means of conventional resources provided by the college (control group). Later students from one government and a private college were taught through ‘BLOGS’ (experimental group). 91 have studied in state board while 59 passed their +2 in schools running on Delhi Board (CBSE/ICSE). An achievement test was also conducted to know the effectiveness of the usage of ‘BLOGS’ in teaching and learning Economics at college level. Out of 150 students 85 were girls and 65 boys. Among them 77 were from urban area and 73 from rural area

Table 1: Details of Students

Students		Girls	Boys	Urban	Rural	State board	Delhi Board
Govt.	G1	14	20	10	23	19	15
	G2	15	24	12	24	21	19
Total		44	29	22	47	40	34
Private	P1	17	20	32	13	25	13
	P2	19	21	23	13	26	12
Total		41	36	55	26	51	25

Tools and Technique:

Likert Scale:

Most of the participants are between the age of 20 and 25. In Likert scale we found 41.6 percent students expressed their inclination towards usage of blogs in teaching and learning process. 32.4 percent expressed that blogs cannot replace class lectures, 37.9 percent believe that blogs can replace class lectures and 29.7 percent were neutral on this issue.

114 of the students (76 percent) stated that they had not used blogs before this course. 88 of them (58.6 percent) stated that their level of expertise with blogs was at the intermediate level, 49 of them (32.6 percent) at the advanced level, and 8 of them (5.3 percent) at the expert level. We can say that students perceive learning with blogs in Economics in a positive manner and are highly motivated to integrate technology in education

Table 2: Achievement Test Scores

Group	Category	Control Group		Experimental Group		t-value	Remarks
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Overall		12.7	2.4	17.4	2.6	11.4	Sig*
Gender	Girls	14.2	1.8	19	2.1	11.2	Sig*
	Boys	11.3	3.1	16.1	3.2	6.13	Sig*
Area	Rural	9.25	2.7	14.4	2.9	7.9	Sig*
	Urban	16.3	2.2	20.5	2.4	8	Sig*
Board	State	10.2	2.9	15.2	2.6	8.6	Sig*
	CBSE/ICSE	15.2	1.9	19.7	2.7	7.3	Sig*

*at .01 level

A common standardized achievement test was conducted upon controlled and experimental group. A t-test was conducted to compare the means of the two groups. The t-test was used to compare the effect of gender upon use of ‘BLOGS’ as well as the economic condition of the students upon use of the ICT tool in teaching- learning process. There is significant difference in attainment of knowledge in Indian Agriculture between the control and experimental group post teaching through ‘BLOGS’. The mean of the experimental group is 17.4 which is better than the controlled group (12.7).

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference in the achievement level of boys and girls in learning through ‘BLOGS’.

There is a significant difference in achievement by the girls of the experimental group who has an excellent mean of 19. Same is the case of the boys from experimental group who are a head of the control group boys with mean of 16.1.

Hypothesis 2: There is no difference in the achievement level of students from urban and rural areas in learning through ‘BLOGS’.

There is a significant difference in achievement between the group having rural and urban background. In control and experimental group students from rural background are unable to attain more marks in achievement test than students belonging to urban region. Urban region students in both the groups maintain their marks with mean more than 15.

Hypothesis 3: There is no difference in the achievement level of students from state board schooling and central board schooling in learning through ‘BLOGS’.

There is a significant difference in the achievement level of students from state board schooling and central board schooling in learning through ‘BLOGS’. In both the groups

students who did their schooling from state board are unable to perform better than those who studied in schools based on CBSE/ICSE board.

Hypothesis 4: There is no difference in the achievement level of students with reference to different income levels of their parents in learning through ‘BLOGS’.

Table 3: Family Income Impact

Income	Category	Total students*	Interest*	Mean**
< Rs.15000	Low Income	18	17	13.2
Rs.15000-25000	Lower Middle Income	26		
Rs.25000-35000	Middle	27	39	15.1
Rs.35000-45000	Upper Middle Income	14		
Rs.45000-55000	High	9	44	23.9
>Rs.55000	Rich	6		

*In percentage **Experimental Group

Above table shows that their family income was categorized into six categories to know the effect of economic status on use of ICT in Higher Education. 44 percent of students belonging to family of high income group are more interested in usage of ‘BLOGS’ while teaching-learning process. Only 17 percent from low income are interested in using ICT in education. It may be on their part of unaffordability of technological aids used for learning through ‘BLOGS’.

Students whose parents are considered to be in high income group within the experimental group perform better in the achievement test (23.9).

Hypothesis 5: There is no difference in the achievement level of students with reference to different educational levels of their parents in learning through ‘BLOGS’.

Table 3: Parental Education Impact

Parents Qualification	Category	Mean*
Primary, Secondary, HSE, ITI, Diploma	Low Educated	12.2
Graduation, PG, Professional Course	Highly Educated	16.8
Technical, M Phil, PhD	Very High	23.2

*Experimental Group

There is a significant difference in the achievement level of students with reference to different educational levels of their parents in learning through ‘BLOGS’. From the table we can easily analyze that students within the experimental group, whose parents are technically and highly qualified perform better and have mean of 23.2 in the achievement test.

6. Conclusion:

The results of this study show that 'BLOGS' are seen as a good tool for teaching and learning. There is a positive relationship between use of 'BLOGS' and achievement in learning. But varied socio-economic backgrounds of students leave its impact upon their achievement. There is significant difference in the attainment of knowledge and application of the content taught with 'BLOGS' between the control and experimental group. But students with sound socio-economic background achieved more than those having weak background. The socio-economic condition of a student affects in attaining the knowledge through ICT (Blogs here). In reference to the socio economic status, it is learnt that students from rural background studying in government colleges, having low income parents or studied in schools of state board failed to perform better than the rest of the category. Whereas, students from urban background with high income parents, studying in private colleges or studied in CBSE/ICSE schools are performing better in subject matter taught through 'BLOGS'. Urban students have more interest in using ICT for study purpose. They perform better after learning through 'BLOGS'. The economic status and parent's qualification have a positive impact on learning through 'BLOGS'. Parents who are very high qualified generally motivate their wards in usage of ICT in education. Interestingly, girls are more motivated in learning through 'BLOGS' than boys in the experimental group.

During group discussion it has come to the notice that Blog discussions helped students to share their knowledge and experiences with others. Also important to note, that majority of them acknowledge that other student's comments on their blog posts are important and blog discussion helped them to understand other's point of view. Student found support for peer feedback on their blog post. Though majority of them said that Blogs should be user-friendly. This might be the reason that the user-friendliness of a blog had a significant effect on the perceived learning of the learners. The study shows how Blogs have succeeded in converting the mind of teachers to use it in their future occupational roles as ICT teachers. It might be expected that as they compose their own blog entries about instructional design, teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their individual experiences and understanding. This, in turn encourages them to modify their own beliefs and behavior in relation to the subject studied. But, teachers do not have control over the socio-economic background of students. Still, efforts can be made by the School/College leaders in overcoming its side-effects by providing healthy environment in the campus. For further research studies, it is

suggested that more factors accounting for socio-economic background can be included in order to study their effect upon ICT learning.

7. References:

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